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PACKAGE OF SMOKING ARTICLES

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to smoking articles, such as cigarettes or cigars, and more particularly to a package for smoking articles and a combination of the package with smoking articles.

[0002] Society today is placing greater and greater restrictions on where individuals can smoke cigarettes, particularly indoors. In many municipalities, smoking is completely prohibited in office buildings and restaurants. Workers and patrons are therefore forced to go outdoors to smoke a cigarette. Normally, particularly for employees, there is a limited amount of time for them to smoke a cigarette before they must return to work. When smoking conventional cigarettes, this results in smoking only a portion of the entire cigarette. The remaining unsmoked portion of the cigarette is then either discarded or somehow saved for later use. This results in either wasting a portion of the cigarette, which in today's market is quite expensive, or attempting to store a partially-burned cigarette which entails saving the dirty, burned cigarette somewhere for later use.

[0003] This problem has been addressed to a degree in the past, for example, U.S. Patent No. 3,314,434 discloses a breakable cigarette with a slidable holder. In this patent, a cigarette holder and the cigarette are broken in two. Once the holder and cigarette are broken in half, the user must slide the holder completely across the cigarette to the opposite end where it engages a flange to be held in place.

[0004] A number of other patents are known in the art, i.e., U.S. Patent Nos. 3,391,699; 2,968,305; 2,979,058; and 609,741, which show two full-length cigarettes connected by a filter or mouthpiece which is then cut in half to separate the

cigarettes. However, none of this prior art provides a simple and easy to assemble cigarette which allows a smoker to smoke a half-length cigarette.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a package of smoking articles that can be selectively broken at a midpoint to provide two smaller packages of smoking articles, complete with filters.

[0006] Pursuant to this object, and others which will become apparent hereafter, one aspect of the present invention resides in the combination of a package and smoking articles contained in the package, wherein the package and the smoking articles are simultaneously dividable into two equal halves so as to create two separate packages of smoking articles which are equal to substantially half of the length of the original smoking articles.

[0007] In another embodiment of the invention, the smoking articles are initially formed to have a length and weight of a conventional cigarette, however, the filter of the cigarette is arranged at the middle of the cigarette so that a rod shaped tobacco element extends from each end of the filter. The midpoint of the filter is perforated, cut, or has a tear line so that the filter can be split in two to form two shorter cigarettes with two shorter filters.

[0008] The package for the cigarettes also has a tear line or perforation around its midsection which corresponds to the tear line in the filters contained in the package. In this way, the package and the smoking articles contained therein can be divided in two simultaneously along the tear lines. By breaking or separating the package and smoking articles in two the user ends up with two shorter smoking articles from each initial smoking article. The smoking articles can of course be, for example, cigarettes or cigars.

[0009] The novel features which are considered as characteristic of the invention are set forth in particular in the appended claims. The invention itself, however, as to its construction and method of operation together with additional objects and advantages thereof will be best understood from the following

description of specific embodiments when read in connection with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of an embodiment of the present invention;

[0011] FIGURE 2 is a perspective view of the embodiment of Figure 1 with the package and smoking articles in a split condition;

[0012] FIGURE 3 is a view taken along the line III-III in Figure 1; and

[0013] FIGURE 4 is a view as in Figure 3 with the package completely separated.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0014] As shown in Figure 1, the invention includes a package 1 having a tear line 2 in its side walls at a point substantially midway between the top 3 and the bottom 4 of the package 1. The tear line 2 can be formed by, for example, perforations, cuts, or indentations in the side walls. In the illustrated embodiment, the tear line extends along only three side walls of the package 1. However, the perforation can also extend along all four side walls of the package. The perforation 2 is such that the package which is generally made of paper or thin cardboard can be easily broken along the perforation so that the package forms two package halves 1a, 1b. If the perforation extends completely around the package, the package halves 1a, 1b can be completely separated as shown in Figure 4. The package itself can have any shape which will accommodate smoking articles such as cigarettes and cigars. For example, the package can be cylindrical.

[0015] Figure 3 shows a cross section through the non-separated package 1. As can be seen here, cigarettes 5 are arranged in the package 1. Each of the cigarettes has two tobacco elements 6 that extend from a centrally located filter 7. The tobacco elements 6 have a length equal to that of a conventional cigarette so that the overall package 1 is the size of a conventional pack of cigarettes. The filter 7 of each cigarette has a tear line, here perforation 8, that extends substantially midway through the filter 7 and corresponds to the perforation 2 in the side walls of the package 1. The perforations in the cigarettes are such that when the two halves of the package are broken apart the filter 7 is split in two so that each cigarette is broken into two smaller cigarettes that have a length equal to substantially half the length of a conventional cigarette, which length is made up of a tobacco element 6 and a filter 7a, that is half the original filter 7. It is also possible to separate the cigarettes prior to arranging them in the package 1. In this way, in order to break the package in two it is not necessary to separate the cigarettes contained in the package.

[0016] In the embodiment shown in Figure 2, the perforation only extends along three side walls of the package 1. The fourth side wall is provided with a crease 9 that extends between the ends of the perforation at the edges of the fourth sidewall so as to form a fold line or hinge along which the non-perforated side wall of the package 1 can be bent. This construction allows the package to be opened to expose the split cigarettes contained therein to allow access to the cigarettes. Once access is no longer required, the two halves of the package can be folded back together to protect the cigarettes contained therein.

[0017] The present invention provides the benefit that a smoker who is pressed for time or does not for another reason desire to smoke an entire conventional cigarette has the opportunity to smoke less than a conventional cigarette in a clean and hygienic manner. The invention also provides the benefit that it is no longer necessary to throw away any unconsumed remaining portion of a partially-smoked full length cigarette or store such an unhygienic, previously-used item for later use. This allows the smoker to save money by not wasting unused tobacco, requiring the purchase of additional cigarettes, and also provides the benefit of a fresh, shorter cigarette for smoking at a later time as opposed to a previously semi-consumed cigarette.

[0018] While the invention has been illustrated and described above, it is not intended to be limited to the details shown since various modifications and structural changes may be made without departing in any way from the spirit of the present invention.

[0019] Without further analysis, the foregoing will so fully reveal the gist of the present invention that others can, by applying current knowledge, readily adapt various applications without omitting features that, from the standpoint of prior art, merely constitute essential characteristics of the generic or specific aspects of this invention.

[0020] What is claimed is new and desired to be protected by Letters Patent as set forth in the appended claims.